

*The volume is dedicated to Maria Ławrynowicz
botanist, mycologist, Editor-in-Chief of Acta Mycologica, on the occasion
of her seventieth birthday and forty five years of scientific activity*



At the 56. Congress of the Polish Botanical Society in
Olsztyn, June 2013

Photo M. Petruszka

Professor Maria Ławrynowicz was born on 17 May 1943 at Mstów near Częstochowa. Between 1961 and 1966 she studied in the Faculty of Biology and Earth Sciences, University of Łódź and, from 1 October 1965, while still a student, was employed at the Chair of Plant Systematics and Geography.

Professor Jakub Mowszowicz, Head of the Chair, gave Maria the challenging task of setting up a specialist group in mycology. In parallel with her scientific research and teaching, she started to organize, forming a mycological laboratory and gathering around her students interested in fungi. From the outset she made it her priority to assemble collections of larger fungi and, particularly, hypogeous species.

In 1971 Maria Ławrynowicz received the degree of Science Doctor in Biology (approximately equivalent to a PhD) on the basis of her paper on fungal communities in oak-hornbeam forests of central Poland. This event also marked the starting point of many years of cooperation with Professor Alina Skirgiełło (University of Warsaw) with the objective of developing an infrastructure for mycology. From this time, Maria focused her attention on hypogeous fungi, one of her great early successes being the discovery of black truffles (*Tuber mesentericum*) in Poland on the Czystochowa Upland, close to her birthplace.

In 1984 Maria obtained the scientific degree of Habilitated Doctor in Biology (approximately equivalent to a DSc) on the basis of her treatise *Taxonomic-Chorological Study of European Species of Hypogeous Ascomycetes*, and in 1985 was appointed to the position of Docent (Reader) and then Head of the Mycological Laboratory in the department. In 1994 Maria obtained the scientific title of Professor. In 2000, the Mycological Laboratory became the Department of Mycology within the Chair of Algology and Mycology, which is now also led by Maria.

She is the author or a co-author of nearly 200 publications. Her main research areas are: hypogeous fungi (establishing the northern limits of truffles in Europe); spatial distributional zones of larger fungi in towns such as Łódź; studies of fungal communities in nature reserves in central and other regions of Poland; mycological monitoring in European oak forests (as Coordinator for Poland in a Polish-Czech-Italian project within a European Union framework). She is also head of the Herbarium Mycologicum, a fungal reference collection amounting now to over 30000 dried specimens and including one of the biggest contemporary collections of hypogeous fungi in Europe.

Maria's teaching activities have included: organization, programme development and leadership of the Full-time Doctoral Studies of Ecology and Environmental Protection, completed by 106 postgraduate students over a 20 year period; supervision of 9 doctorates; supervision of scientific aspects of over 100 masters theses.

Maria's work in the conservation of nature, and particularly in fungal conservation deserves special attention. She was a co-author of the first list of protected fungi and the first red list of threatened fungi in Poland. As far as duties in international organizations are concerned, she is the Polish delegate to the European Mycological Association, a member of the Scientific Council of the International Society for Conservation of Fungi, and a member and, in the years 1995-1999 President of the European Council for Conservation of Fungi. From 1990 to 1998 she was a member of the Executive Committee of the International Mycological Association. Her consequent active participation in meetings of these scientific bodies and, above all, in the thirteen Congresses of European Mycologists held since 1966, has meant that she is a well-known figure in the international mycological community.

For many years Professor Ławrynowicz has also been a member of various important national scientific bodies including the Committees of Botany and Nature Conservation of the Polish Academy of Sciences and, since 2004, the State Council for Nature Conservation.

Maria Ławrynowicz has been awarded several prizes and distinctions, including the Bachelor's Cross of Poland Revival Order, the Medal of the National Education Committee, and Honorary Membership of the Polish Botanical Society.